

Electronic Health Records

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An electronic health record (EHR) is a medical record in a digital format; to record, store and review medical information. The same information that is stored in a paper medical chart can be entered into an EHR, which may include: basic information, such as name, address, phone number; medical history; list of medications, allergies and shots; laboratory test results; radiology images; and advance directives or living wills. The information contained within EHRs is a medical record and legal document, thus subject to applicable federal and State laws and regulations.

Patient portals are a feature of EHRs and enable patients to view their medical records, receive lab results, schedule or change appointments, e-mail their provider with questions, and renew medications. EHRs are the essential next step in the continued progress of achieving a statewide health information exchange (HIE). The HIE is a secure, electronic exchange of health information among authorized stakeholders in the health care community, such as care providers, patients, and public health agencies, to drive timely, efficient, high-quality, patient-centered care. Physicians may optimize EHR functionality through increased use of health information technology along with process improvements, workflow reengineering and recovering hidden capacities within practices.

Benefits of EHRs

The widespread use of EHRs has the potential to improve the quality, safety, and efficiency of patient care delivery, while reducing overall health care costs. Physician adoption and use of EHRs can enhance patient care through:

- *Comprehensive Records:* EHRs supply providers with the information they need to evaluate a patient's current condition in the context of the patient's health history and other treatments.
- *Speed in a Crisis:* EHRs provide instant access to information of a patient's medical history, allergies, and medications. This may augment

providers' decision-making in patient management under certain circumstances.

- *Financial Benefits*
 - Optimized use of EHRs can increase productivity and allow physicians time to see more patients;
 - Increased billing results in more accurate patient coding; and
 - Reduction in costs associated with filing, retrieving, and storage of paper charts.
- *Improved Patient Outcomes*
 - Increased ability to share and exchange data among providers offers a more comprehensive view of the patient's medical history;
 - Enhanced management of patient visits and follow-ups due to automated alerts, messaging, and reminders; and
 - Improved access to a patient's health information at the time that it is needed.
- *Improved Office Staff Satisfaction*
 - Some studies indicated that reduced filing and paperwork create a more seamless operational process between check-in and check-out.
- *Customer Satisfaction Improvement*
 - Patients may have increased access to their data and more communication with their physicians.
- *Process Improvement*
 - Enhanced ability to achieve goals based on measurable outcomes from reengineering workflow;
 - Eliminated waste as data automation allows standardization and simplification of process.

Financial Benefits of EHR Use

According to a report by the Medical Group Management Association, Health Data Management, medical practices that have implemented EHR systems report stronger financial performance than those using paper-based systems. The report, entitled *Electronic Health Records Impacts on Revenue, Costs and Staffing: 2010 based on 2009 Data*, used data from a survey of 1,324 primary care and specialty practice members.ⁱ

The key findings of the study include:

- Independent physician practices with EHR systems had a median of about \$49,916 greater total revenue after operating costs per full-time physician in 2009 than practices using paper-based systems;
- After five years of using EHRs, independent physician practices reported a median operating margin that was about 10 percent higher than physician practices in their first year of EHR use.

MHCC 2013 EHR Product Portfolio

The MHCC developed the EHR Product Portfolio (portfolio) in 2008 as a tool for physicians to evaluate and compare information on EHR products. The portfolio is updated bi-annually and currently includes approximately 40 vendors. All vendors participating in the portfolio must offer a discount to Maryland providers and be nationally certified. Participating vendors are required to provide:

- EHR product screen shots;
- Pricing and projections;
- Privacy and security policies;
- Case studies;
- Reference reports; and
- Website addresses & contact information.

The portfolio is located at:

http://mhcc.dhmdh.maryland.gov/hit/ehrVendors/Pages/EHR_Porfolio.aspx.

MHCC Select Vendors in the Portfolio

ABEL Medical Software Inc.: www.abelmedicalsoftware.com	MD Web Solutions: www.mdwebsolutions.net
Advanced Data Systems Corporation: www.adsc.com	MDOffice Healthcare: www.mdoffice.com
American Medical Software, Inc. www.americanmedical.com	MED3000: www.med3000.com
ASP.MD: www.asp.md	Medent EMR/EHR: www.medent.com
AZZLY: www.azzly.com	Medical Informatics Engineering: www.mieweb.com
BackChart: www.backchart.com	Medical Messenger: www.emrmessenger.com
Office Practicum Pediatric Software: www.officepracticum.com	Medstreaming: www.medstreaming.com
Cyfluent: www.cyfluent.com	MedSym Solutions: www.medsymsolutions.com
DataNet Solutions, Inc.: www.datanetsolutions.org	ModuleMD: www.modulemd.com
DigiDMS: www.digidms.com	nAbleMD: www.nablemd.com
Doctors Partner: www.emr-electronicmedicalrecords.com	Nortec: www.nortecehr.com
Elation: www.elationemr.com	PatagoniaHealth: www.patagoniahealth.com
Encite: www.encite.us	Patient Click: www.patientclick.com
Falcon EHR: www.falconehr.com	Praxis EMR: www.praxisemr.com
Fhases (SON Information Systems): www.fhases.com	Sevocity: www.sevocity.com
GE Healthcare: www.virtualofficeware.net	STI Computer Services: www.sticomputer.com
ICANotes Behavioral Health EHR: www.icanotes.com	TactusMD: www.tactusmd.com
iMedicware: www.imedicware.com	EZ EMRX (Total Outsource Systems): www.ezemrx.com
iPatientCare: www.iPatientCare.com	Vision Info: www.mdcare.com
Key Medical: www.keymedicalsoftware.com	Waiting Room Solutions: www.waitingroomsolutions.com

ⁱ Healthcare IT News. Electronic better than paper for bottom line, 2010. Available at: <http://www.healthcareitnews.com/news/electronic-better-paper-bottom-line>